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Harold Rose - Former Clerk-Treasurer recalls his thirty seven year career.

As the fourth largest organized township in Ontario, King Township has faced its share of changes in the past forty years. And the man who probably knows about these more than anyone else is Harold Rose, former Clerk-Treasurer of the township for thirty seven years.

Harold was hired as clerk-treasurer in the lean hungry year of 1937. "Times were tough and jobs were few and far between. And I have never done anything like this before," Harold recalls. "I went in cold. I just had to feel my way along. But I enjoyed the work and meeting people, and I made a lot of friends."

Yes times were tough. The Roses opened their home to complete strangers, converting their living room into the township office. I had to pay the rent and heat it as well. It didn't leave much salary, but it was a matter of being glad to have a job.

Mrs. Rose worked with Mr. Rose as his secretary for the first four and one half years - for no salary. "They could not hire a girl, so I worked to help Harold" his wife Ruth recalls. The office changed locations a couple of times before coming to rest in its permanent home on the King Sideroad, one quarter mile west of Highway 400. "I chose the site together with Bill Hodgson, who was reeve of the township at that time. We chose the site because it was a central location, east and west, and it was near King City and convenient to everyone."

Mr. Rose recalls the early days when township council meetings were a travelling show which stopped regularly in the four villages of King City, Kettleby, Schomberg and Nobleton. The meetings were not the orderly, efficient sessions they are today, but they were exciting. "The meetings used to start on a Saturday morning and go until 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening. "More people attended the meetings then. They seemed to have more business to conduct." Harold has seen a good many changes in the township in his near forty year career.

There was no such thing as a subdivision in the area when he began. Today King Township enjoys the status of one of the most popular residential areas in Ontario. In spite of the rapid growth which Harold says began after the second world war, the township has managed to retain the rural flavor. He attributes this to good planning. "The general idea of the planners was to maintain the country lifestyle," he says. People are standing in line to move into the township, and there is scarcely a house to be bought in Nobleton or King City.

One change he has seen is the residents of King Township electing a woman mayor in 1973, Mrs. Margaret Britnell. "I did not treat her any differently that I would a man," he remembers. "If she came to me for information and help, I helped her. That is the clerk's duty after all."

Harold has definite ideas on the role of a clerk-treasurer in a municipality. "If council asked my opinion, I gave it to them, I was open to all members. But I don't think a clerk should interfere unless he's asked." He never doubted council was the ultimate authority. I knew the council was in charge and I never had any trouble. If they asked for a report, I gave it.

Things have changed around the township office since the days Harold and Ruth first attended to the business of managing a municipality. The office has a staff of about fourteen people to look after the township's affairs.

When Mr. Rose retired in 1974, he recommended he be succeeded by a full-time clerk and treasurer. Deputy-clerk Cameron Duncan assumed the role of clerk, and deputy-treasurer George Novakovich became the treasurer.

If Harold had his choice of the two positions today, he would opt for Clerk because of the human element of the job.

It is not that he didn't experience people problems in his years of dealing with the public. "Lots of eople do not like to pay taxes and they were not smiling too much when they came in. But I never had too many problems," he adds with a smile.

Harold retired in 1974 but continued to work with the township for two years as an advisor.

As clerk Cameron Duncan says, "You can imagine after being clerk-treasurer for thirty seven years, Harold had a lot of information in his head.

The now retired clerk enjoyed his two years as a consultant. The pressure was off, and he was able to enjoy his job even more. So far, retirement is everything he had hoped it would be. He has time to work in his garden, tend his flowers, and visit his son and daughter.

A life-long resident of the township, the Nobleton man would rather spend his retirement there than in the sunny south of Florida or California, "I've never had any desire to leave King and I guess I never will."